

Milenio

Ambiental

Una publicación con la mirada puesta en las metas del milenio

Special edition for the 3rd World Urban Forum, UN-HABITAT, Vancouver, June 2006

La construcción política,
social y cultural
de las ciudades del Mercosur

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Municipios centroamericanos
en red frente a la
vulnerabilidad ambiental

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La visión de las ciudades
latinoamericanas frente a los
desafíos globales

Jaime TORRES LARA

Global Challenges
and City Networks:
Canada's Sustainable
Cities Initiative

Rod GILLYATT



City Networking:

*A Tool for Local
Sustainability*



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Ciudades en Red: Herramientas de la sustentabilidad local

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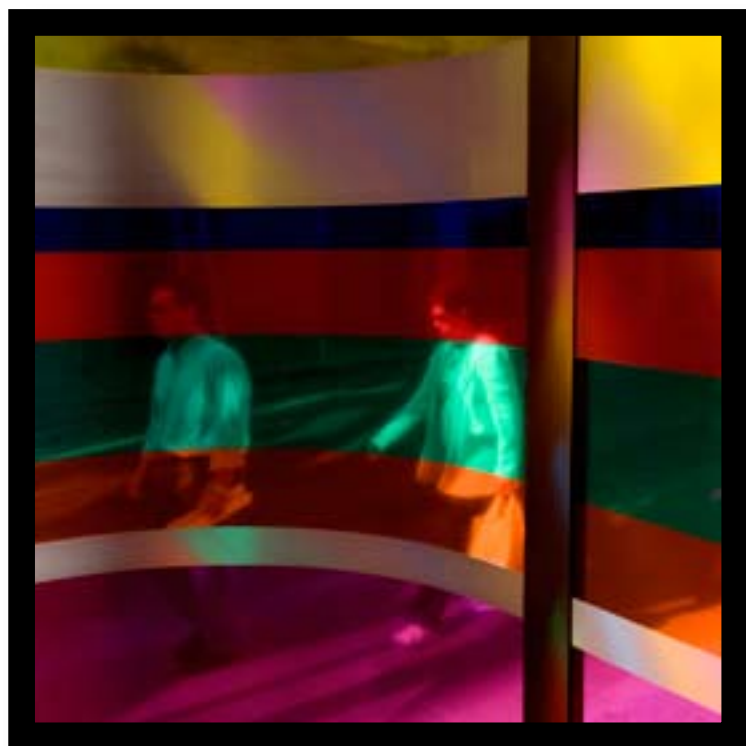
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Networks of Cooperation: **Tools of sustainability**

By E. H. Passalacqua

Networks are probably the key factor in confronting today's urban management challenges, and even more so in the future. All of the parallel activities to the 3rd World Urban Forum in June 2006 are described as "networking events" and a highlight is the session "City Networks: Engines of Urban Sustainability", which includes presentations on four of the experiences described in this edition of *Milenio Ambiental*. Networks are irreplaceable "engines", not the only tool but the most appropriate, applicable in all the areas, so that people will want to live and work in a city that is safe, inclusive, well planned and managed, and which offers equality of opportunities. This is, after all, what we are talking about when we say sustainability.

The fact that the World Urban Forum is being held in Vancouver has many significant connotations. That city, which independent studies have shown to have the best quality of life on Earth, has successfully used networks as much for itself as for the world in order to improve urban governance in general, and environmental sustainability in particular: through the Greater Vancouver Regional District, harmonizing and integrating 21 different municipalities; the establishment of ICLEI, an international network of cities that applied new modalities to cooperation amongst cities for local initiatives on the environment, like intermediation for seeking partners through its regional offices; the MAS network and the Sustainable Cities Initiative, which Rod Gillyatt writes about in this edition.

But furthermore, it was in Vancouver 30 years ago that the contemporary era of cities began, when the United Nations established the specialized agency for human settlements, UN-HABITAT. At the time, urban studies in Latin America had timidly begun to take up local government as an issue of some interest, but things have changed dramatically since then. They used to talk about government, and now it's governance; housing policy was thought of in terms of building big complexes overseen by national governments, not like today, with more flexible schemes involving a multitude of actors; urban planning, international cooperation and integration processes were analyzed from the center and from top to bottom, but today they are understood as eminently decentralized and from the bottom up. The changes have been so many, so varied and so deep, that the context has required the invention of two words: *dynaxity* and *glocalization*. The first alludes to the dynamic of change, its velocity and scope, as well as the growing complexity of actors and relations between them. It is this framework that network organization emerges as the most appropriate

way to encompass and manage the function of these players and relationships. *Glocalization*, meanwhile, describes the interrelation between globalization as a universal phenomenon and the paradox, also global, of the renewed appreciation of local spaces for interrelating beyond the national governments. It is here, too, that networks appeared in reality as the most ideal form to establish these links.

The cities -- whether we see them in our region as the dream of order, as chaos, as a vision on the hill -- will not only remain throughout the 21st century, but will become even more important due to the unceasing growth of the urban population, the roles of cities in the globalized world -- which seem to encompass the entire destiny of humanity -- and due to the networks that form and re-form amongst them to solve their problems and to perform their functions, old and new.

The nexuses between cities date back many years. Three decades ago bilateral bridges (the not very elegant "C2C" city-to-city cooperation) predominated, through sister city arrangements or special ties motivated by ethnic, social and cultural reasons, or attempting to overcome overwhelming divisions. The new context has multiplied the reasons and the formats. From putting themselves in contact with other realities and cultures, to organizing visits and more or less planned exchanges. Then, getting to know other cities with similar problems and similar realities. When the interests at stake, the thematic focuses and geographic diversity multiplied, organization in networks became indispensable. As for cooperation, network organization helped increase the reach of those bridges, serve as a collective repository, and facilitate a more comfortable and effective means of exchange, sharing, association and learning.

But there were other factors that contributed to the diffusion of networks as the link for cooperation: in organizational theory, private and public alike, doubts began to arise about the relevance of organizational charts for revealing what was really happening; at the level of local public management a multitude of associations and public-private partnerships were formed and the rigid organization and hierarchy increasingly proved their obsolescence; in the world and in Latin America -- the region of all the experiences presented in this edition, one of them North-South -- networks appeared as a phase that overtook the two previous stages of zeal for planning, followed by aversion towards the State. Last but not least, the diffusion of information technology provided an ideal support for networking, to the degree that sometimes the substance (social exchanges) is confused with the means

(computerization).

And furthermore, cities, whose layout is itself a network, which for a long time formed networks with their surrounding populations and with other cities, and which turned to electronic governance with increasing enthusiasm (to improve management, provide services and connect with their communities and with the external world), found in network organization the specific ideal traits for cooperation: it is flexible and open, it transcends established limits, it handles issues that would otherwise be nearly impossible to deal with, and requires complementarity of actors (not domination or cooptation).

Although network research has been developing for some time in the region, there is a long way to go, and this is an important contribution to the UN-HABITAT agenda. In the conceptual sphere, despite notable advances -- identifying common elements in nearly all networks, ranging from electronics to biochemistry -- still lacking is a systematic focus for a systematic reality, and a vision that combines public management, information management and ICTs (information and communication technologies) management.

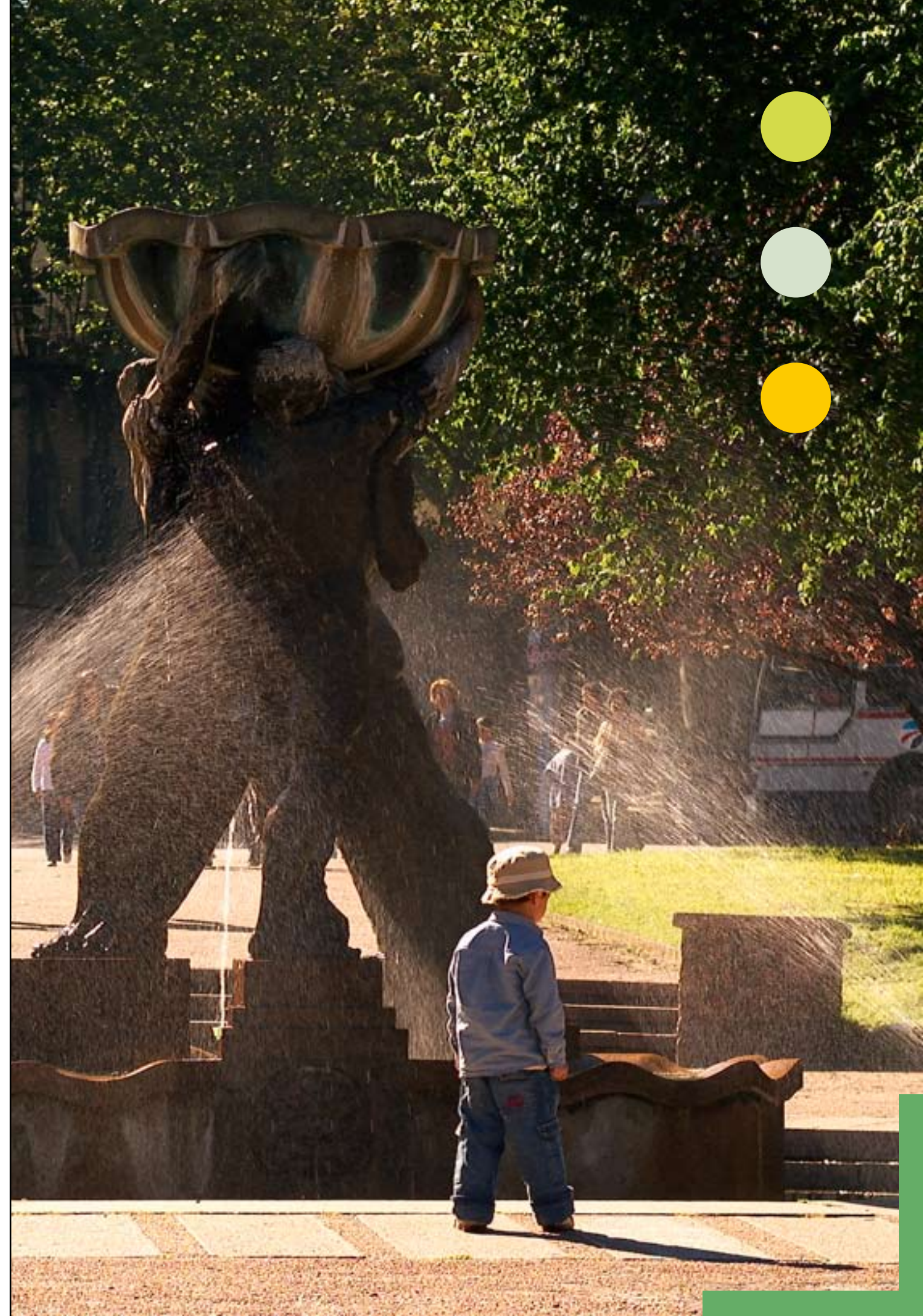
In reality, Latin America presents a great number and variety of cooperation networks, of which we can only provide a few brief examples here: the initial ones, like those for science and technology; the high-level inter-state networks like RIAD; North-South, like URB-AL of cities in action; regional services, like Education Cities and Healthy Cities, or for improving and reforming public management, like METALOGO; and numerous national networks, true centers for the exchange of local experiences, like the pioneering and prize-winning IBAM in Brazil and the Local Experiences Bank in Argentina.

It is important to note than one key to success, just as in the cases presented in this Milenio Ambiental, is that along with the local governments -- indispensable and primordial actors -- it is vital to incorporate others: the third sector, associations of local governments and all types of non-governmental organizations and community groups, and the private sector. Because the Latin American local governments present a set of endemic defects -- insufficient competitiveness, resource shortages, lack of trained personnel -- that should not turn into a complaint of victimization but rather requires the intelligent maximization of opportunities that the new context offers, among them cooperation and action in networks as a way of mitigating those restrictions. Finally, today there is a nearly universal consensus that the local sphere represents the convergence par excellence of civil society and the information society.

In addition to structural limitations are two

more that are frequent in Latin America and that conspire against the enormous potential of cooperation networks: the lack of sustainability over time (due to design errors, lack of commitment by the players involved, lack of added value to satisfy the specific interests of participants) and the utilization of "network" and "network organization" as placeholder terms, without greater precision or a notion of what they really mean, in a false consensus of universal rhetoric in a bid to be fashionable.

The experiences presented here portray relative successes or significant efforts that have taken on these and other problems and represent, in their way, contributions of great interest with relation to environmental management. IDRC (Environmental Management Secretariat, Urban Poverty and Environmental Program of the International Development Research Centre of Canada) has supported the research and development of networks across the continent, and not only for multiplying the effectiveness of aid. The telecenters project in Mexico served to illustrate, once again, that this social shareware functions very well when all local social actors are involved. Through the Environmental Management Secretariat (EMS), IDRC sponsored the development of the Integrated System for Environmental Management (SIGA), which was disseminated through Merco-Cities (the first case presented in this edition, it is a network that emerged from the integration of national governments in Mercosur but, with flexibility and appropriate management, has seen many more achievements than the umbrella organization, and demonstrates how essential the active participation of democratically elected local politicians is for network continuity), and later established connections with Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus (FEMICA) (the second case, with a decisive role of an association of local governments of Central America that develops a network for confronting natural disasters but with a broader sense of vulnerability that includes poverty). The third experience Federation of Latin American Cities, Municipalities and Associations (FLACMA) provides a broader challenge, dealing with the regional chapter of United Cities and Local Governments, CGLU (arising from the fusion in Rio in 2001 of International Union of Local Authorities, IULA and World Towns Organization, WTO, two global organizations that tirelessly promote the creation of city networks) and its effort to transform itself into the "network of networks" through different actions carried out and being developed. The fourth article, about the Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI), not only shows cases of successful cooperation in waste management in cities of the South with a network originating in the





North, but also operational modes of linking the public sector, private sector and third sector with original and flexible formats. The case of the Network of Authorities for Environmental Management in Latin American and Caribbean Cities, the fifth and final article, fully illustrates horizontality, mechanisms of diffusion and continuity, and the importance of combining efforts instead of pursuing rivalries or competing for provincial prestige.

Contemporary to the meeting in Vancouver 30 years ago, a meeting was held in Stockholm that raised environmental concern to the top of the agenda around the world, and on this continent in particular. The nature of environmental problems, as well as the focus of planners and technicians, gave the issue a centralist bent from top to bottom, and nearly exclusive roles for national and regional governments. Here also a long road has been traveled, as was recognized at the Johannesburg Summit. And although participation by the highest levels of government is essential, there is a part of environmental control than can only be done locally. Environmental problems in cities are the main portion of global problems, and Agenda 21, which we have established collectively, is fundamentally an agreement of local implementation.

This is why networks are so important in environmental management. There is much to be done at all levels. At the macro level there is little doubt that Millennium Goal 7 on the environment is one of the most -- if not the most -- lagging behind in compliance in Latin America, with all of its consequences for productivity, quality of life, health, etc. In the middle level, the problems of financing for networks must be dealt with systematically, seeking quality cooperation on specific questions. At the micro level, techniques for gathering case studies must be standardized to be able to build consistent bases of the lessons learned from experiences and best practices.

Any attempt to predict the future is risky, given the intensity of changes, the old and new variables that affect it, and the complex international context. Even in terms of partial data, we can advance little in projections: in the last five years the rates of Internet use in Latin America and the Caribbean grew almost exponentially, and even in the South American countries with least growth it increased between 3 and 5 times, with profound changes in the profiles of the average user.

We do know that cities not only are here to stay but that they will only continue to grow (even though United Nations predictions usually tend to sin by excess), and their problems -- but also their opportunities -- will continue to grow. We know that cooperation amongst cities will be ever more indispensable:

not a fashion, not a luxury that not everyone has access to, but rather the most appropriate modality for advancing towards truly sustainable urban management. We increasingly realize that the municipalities in developed countries cooperate with each other much more and better than they do in our region. Local governments do know that networks are inexorable for themselves, from prevention and promotion of health, to seeking jobs for their youth. We know that the information society and the electronic revolution -- far from being libertarian cybertopias or technophobic dystopias, will be with us from now on. And electronic networks, subject to great changes today for social, commercial and technological reasons, prove to be a very powerful instrument so that local governments perform their double role as bodies of local democracy and providers of services, in a world of irreversible decentralization, whatever form this takes.

We also know that, in any case, the classic 4 Cs must be met: computers, with adequate equipment; connectivity for integrating rural spaces, among other things; content, so that it is worth everyone's effort to integrate; and capability, of the people to manage it. We do not know, however, if the networks, beyond generating social capital with economic consequences, serve growth and productivity directly; we know that the local sphere is critical for overcoming the digital divide, but this only as long as other levels of government provide assistance; we do not know if the increase in access to ICTs will take place with the cultural conditions to achieve its effective use; we do not know if the politicians, beginning with the local ones, will be increasingly involved alongside the technicians to sustain these advances over time; we do not know if the recurrence of natural disasters over the long term is sufficient for the continuity of first alert, prevention and risk management networks; we do not know if best practices can be disseminated efficiently with realism and adaptability. We intuit, though we do not know precisely, the variety and quantity of new experiences that could be generated to take full advantage of the potential of networks for cooperation. We do not know, finally, if faced with the magnitude of challenges, awareness will grow about the multiplier effect of cooperation networks for achieving sustainable environmental management.

But we do firmly believe that, modestly but operationally, this edition of Milenio Ambiental serves as a contribution to the effort, and that the Vancouver session, which I will be leading, will open a forum of debate, will deepen the dialogue and will advance towards building a future where networks of cooperation multiply and consolidate as tools of sustainability.

The Social, Cultural and Political Network of Mercosur Cities

By Alberto Kleiman

In this article we aim to analyze the Mercosur Cities Network, created in 1995 and involving 160 cities, including the principal cities of the Southern Cone. We will explore their internal characteristics and their potential as an instrument of replicability of programs, best practices and actions with urban impact, as well as their role in the insertion of cities in the debate and the process of building Mercosur (Southern Common Market) and regional integration.

The Networks of Cities

First, it should be clarified that the concept of "network" used here refers to the international organizations of cities dedicated to international cooperation in its many aspects and purposes: exchanges of experiences and knowledge, forums of policy articulation and defense of local government interests -- whether from the municipalist point of view, or from the internationalist perspective, as much for the vindication of greater participation in global debates as for broader international insertion.

The networks of cities are closely linked to various notions of the idea of network itself: horizontality, capillarity, polycentric structure, absence of hierarchical levels, capacity for expansion, flexibility, informality, decentralization, agility. All of these traits are intuitively associated with what we imagine as a network structure, whatever it might be, and are frequently cited in the literature on the issue. In the case of city networks, two further important concepts are associated with

this organizational type: replicability and multiplication (of information, experiences, knowledge, methods and resources).

Precedents and Political Context

The Asunción Treaty, signed in 1990 by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, which gave rise to Mercosur, represents the culmination of a process of subregional and Latin American integration.

The creation of Mercosur marked the start of a process whose commercial and economic consequences would have considerable impacts in the national economies of its member countries. The increase in the flow of intra-bloc trade and foreign investment led to the increase in interdependence of the national markets and the convergence of macroeconomic policies applied by each of the governments. But at the same time, industrial conversion and adaptation of tariff policies to the requirements of the integration process would unleash conflicts of economic, social and cultural nature. The trade flow would have an impact on the regions and on the cities, generating difficulties for urban infrastructure, environment and migration processes.

Taking into account these and other difficulties, in 1995 -- once again in the city of Asunción -- the mayors of Mercosur's major cities founded the Mercociudades (Merco-Cities) Network, with the clear purpose of creating an institutional space in which the cities could express their opinions on the paths of the integration process (which at that point had not



involved the local authorities) and, secondly, developing a space of convergence and exchange amongst cities that would allow them to carry out more effective and appropriate policies in the globalization era.

Ten years after its creation, the Merco-Cities Network has become a highly representative organization, before local governments of Latin America and other international actors. Its membership has grown gradually and, given its accumulated experience and attitude of resistance in the years when the thesis of an economic and political bloc seemed to be abandoned, the Network has become a necessary reference and an unavoidable interlocutor for other associations of cities from Latin America and other continents.

Since its beginnings, Merco-Cities has challenged the priorities established by the national governments in the subregion's integration process, centered exclusively on trade and economic issues. The focus of Merco-Cities is on the defense of political, social and cultural processes in the urban arena, and is based on their local, democratic and decentralized dimension. As part of the context of Latin American regional integration, Merco-Cities lays out a complex trajectory in searching for and building a qualified and technical political space within the political structures of regional integration.

Democratic Dynamic

In its 10 years of existence, the Merco-Cities Network has been sustained by its perseverance and credibility amongst regional actors. While the Mercosur crises directly affected the member countries, burdened with the uncertainties surrounding the bloc's fate, the Network has maintained its activities and its policy agenda.

We can affirm that in recent years the Merco-Cities Network has evolved greatly in its technical aspects, taking into account the level of organization, the growing participation of cities -- skyrocketing from 6 member cities in 1995 to 161 in 2005 -- it is in the democratic agenda and its operational options where the maturity of the Network is evident.

The democracy of the directorial bodies of Merco-Cities, alternating each year, without a fixed bureaucratic structure and with external resources, obligates the cities to maintain shared responsibility for the Network.

However, the Network's principal decisions are made by the Mayoral Summits, held once a year, and always by consensus. The presence of heads of local government there is essential. The mechanism aims to avoid an attenuated representation of the Network, or an organization

in which functionaries without formal representation end up managing other agendas. The participation of mayors is a means the Network uses to deepen the legitimacy emanating from the elected individuals. The Network's Executive Secretary is always an elected mayor.

The Insertion of Cities in the Institutional Sphere of Mercosur

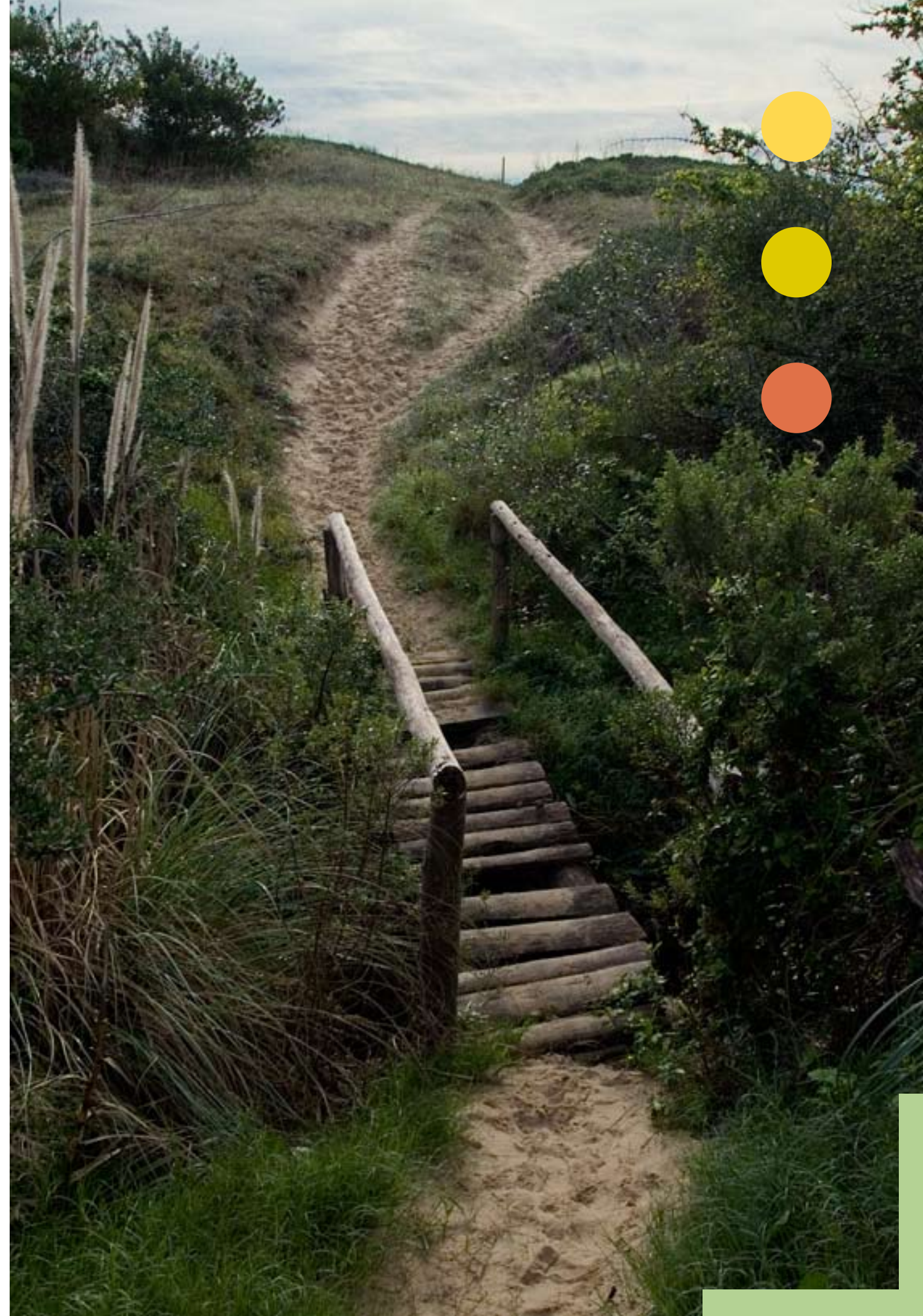
As the principal objective of the Network, and which since its creation aims to orient the regional and national political actions of Merco-Cities, is "the insertion of cities in the institutional structure of Mercosur". This demand had a double role: to make its opinions heard about the decisions taken by the national governments, but which invariably had an impact on municipalities; and to defend a broader political project of integration.

As a strategy to achieve this, Merco-Cities will vindicate its position through direct negotiation with the national governments, but also will pursue independent action, involving local actors and developing its own activities. In this way, the Network's vision is clearly different from that of the national governments, which adopt an exclusive model of integration, typically "top-down". The cities, meanwhile, defend a less centralized model that is inclusive, involving local actors, and with broader participation.

In late 2004, this demand had a response with the creation of the Consultative Forum of Municipalities, Federated States, Provinces and Departments of Mercosur, approved by the Ouro Preto Summit of heads of state that year. The Forum depends directly on the Grupo Mercado Común (GMC), the bloc's executive body. The challenges continue in establishing the Forum and to ensure its technical consistency and political effectiveness, but it is undoubtedly an advance in the fight being led by cities in Mercosur.

The Challenges of Merco-Cities

Many of the current achievements of Merco-Cities were seemingly insurmountable challenges in the past. Some of them have not only been overcome, but today can be considered strengths of the Network. Its internal communication system, for example, is increasingly professional and agile. The member cities already seem better familiarized with their participation, their responsibilities and the issues. But there are always new challenges -- internal and external -- to be confronted.





Objectives, Structure and Function

The “Merco-Cities Founding Act”, result of the 5th Meeting of Mayors of the Southern Cone Subregion of the Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities (UCCI), established the creation of a network of Mercosur cities with a simple structure: a Council of Mayors, an Executive Secretariat and nine Thematic Units that would work on various issues of interest to the cities themselves and the process of integration in the subregion and Latin America in general. The first Thematic Units focused on issues like international trade, science and technology, culture and tourism, among others.

The objectives of Merco-Cities are defined in the Network Statutes, and are divided basically into three groups: a) institutional objectives, which center on seeking recognition and participation in the Mercosur structure; b) objectives of building ties and cooperation, creating sub-networks that are organized in terms of thematic or technical questions, developing mechanisms for communication and exchange of experiences and information, and establishing agreements amongst local governments and networks; c) objectives related to municipal policies to establish guidelines that, to a certain degree, coincide with the effort

undertaken by the Thematic Units, such as training human resources and municipal administration, coordinate planning of actions related to growth and development of cities, establish and define programs for cooperation amongst cities, elaborate strategies for environmental policies, stimulate and promote citizen participation, among others.

The institutional design of Merco-Cities is defined in Article 13 of its statutes. Its entities are: i) General Assembly of Members; ii) Council of Merco-Cities; iii) Directive Commission; iv) Executive Secretariat; and v) Thematic (or technical) Units.

It can be said that Merco-Cities, through its Thematic Units, made possible the space in which cities could establish common strategies in the context of regional integration, but also a space for exchanging experiences in public policies, which often transcended regional limits, such as when member cities participate in other international forums and networks, like the URB-AL Program, of the European Commission, to cite just one example.

The Thematic Units (TUs) serve as the arena for formulating the cities' common policies and technical participation. Currently

there are 14 TUs functioning: Autonomy, Municipal Funding and Management, Science and Technology, International Cooperation, Culture, Local Economic Development, Social Development, Urban Development, Education, Gender and Municipality, Environment, Strategic Planning, Tourism, Youth, and Citizen Safety.

The advances made by the TUs in recent years has brought with it a positive transformation within the Network. As formulators of policy proposals, the TUs have assumed a growing and increasingly active role in the debate of their respective issues, both inside and outside the Network. In this way, the units have used their position to project themselves into political spaces that go beyond the municipal and regional questions, thus enriching the discussion of municipal policies, but also the debate on the regional integration process and the role of cities in the international context.

This is the case, for example, of the participation by the TU on Environment and Sustainable Development, representing the Network, at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+10, in Johannesburg, at the Local Authorities Session.

As challenges the Network faces in the integration process, the search for a better relationship with national and regional governments will be essential for Merco-Cities to be able to occupy the space it formally conquered with the creation of the Consultative Forum of Cities and Regions of Mercosur. Furthermore, the regional integration process is undergoing a period of great intensity, with projects for physical integration, politics, creation of the Mercosur Parliament, workers' organizations. How can the cities participate without being overtaken by the regional and national governments in these processes?

The next challenge is almost a consequence of the last. Utilizing a succinct comparison with the World Urban Forum: since before the 1970s, cities have been demanding the attention of national governments due to the worsening of living conditions of urban populations and human settlements. The urban question only became an issue of global interest when the evidence was recognized by the United Nations. In

Cities continues to need ongoing and additional training for municipal functionaries on urban and regional issues. In this context, the stable sources of resources, such as agreements or fundraising, could be considered in order to create a more dynamic Network and activities.

Brief Conclusions

If we take the experiences of city networks across the continent, the combination of democratic mechanisms of operation and decision-making with the technical capacity in integrated urban policies, and political capacity for negotiations at national, regional and international levels, the experience of Merco-Cities could be considered the most successful. In addition to the fact that the populations represented by the members of Merco-Cities reach total nearly 80 million, this Network becomes an actor of significant political weight in the region.



the same way, the urban issue in Mercosur was not duly handled by the national governments. Merco-Cities has the responsibility of bringing attention to the issue, provoking debate and making it part of the bloc and the process of regional integration.

As internal challenges, returning to the increase of smaller cities' revenues in Merco-Cities, it is important that the Network, which historically was based on large cities and capitals, adapt to the demands and needs of its new members. In the same sense, the integration of cities from Mercosur's new member countries, like Venezuela, and Peru, as associate member, suggests the need for political reflection about the capacities and limits of the Network. Merco-

In this sense, the Merco-Cities Network and the cities it encompasses can serve as essential instruments for achieving something that national actors have not yet been able to, but without which a deeper process of integration will not occur: extend the issue of regional integration into the lives of the people, into daily life. But how to deepen Mercosur, how to create a Mercosur Parliament, for example, without people knowing about its functions, its relevance? Or without people feeling part of something that goes beyond the geographical and symbolic limits of their countries? Creating an active "Mercosur citizenry" is perhaps Mercosur's greatest challenge. And its dimensions extend beyond local, national and regional.





Network of Central American Cities *Tackles Environmental Challenges*

By Patricia Durán de Jager

Executive Director, Federation of Municipalities of the
Central American Isthmus (FEMICA)

The Central American countries have in common their accelerated urban growth, poverty, limited social investment, low local tax revenues, high degrees of exclusion and a great vulnerability to natural disasters.

The precarious situation of a high percentage of municipalities and the lack of response by innumerable local governments makes imperative the modernization of municipal structures and the consolidation of public management in accordance with actual circumstances.

Rapidly changing circumstances; a civil society that organizes and seeks to institutionalize itself in order to participate actively in strategic planning processes and become a protagonist in managing the municipality and the available resources; a community that demands good government, participation, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness.

Globalization has put “local” on the competitiveness agenda, and the commercial opening of Central American demands responsibility. If the local government does not take up the task, the community is ready and willing to do so with a set of specialized organizations.

Public-private alliances are one of the responses to a pending task in the region: sustainable, integral and equitable development. Private sector is understood here not only as the business sector, but also local social capital.

The vision of a group of mayors, who at the end of the 1980s experienced up close the devastation of poverty, war and the unsatisfied demands of citizens, worried about the weak role given local governments in development. The precarious situation led them to create a Central American organization, FEMICA, which would lead a movement to strengthen the municipalities and promote processes of decentralization.

A Network of 1,200 local governments

FEMICA is a network made up of the 1,200 local governments existing in the six countries of the Central American isthmus: Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. It was created in 1991 through an agreement of the Assembly of FEMUCAP (Federation of Municipalities of Capital Cities of Central America and Panama), who democratized their organization in order to give the opportunity to all municipal governments in the region to join the organization.

FEMICA itself founded in 1993 a network comprising local governments, the legislative, governmental, business and civil society sectors, think tanks, donors and the multilateral banking system. The network provides a space

where the different actors at the highest level, originating in the public and private sectors, can discuss and agree on the changes or priorities for consolidating the municipality as competitive, transparent and participatory, making sustainable and integral development of Central American municipalities viable.

This network has met regularly over 12 years to analyze and exchange experiences in problem areas that for FEMICA and its thematic and financial sponsors play a role in local development. From the discussion of why local governance is indispensable for democracy; to the justification of decentralization of local governments in optimal conditions to ensure the success of public management, aside from fiscal, administrative and political decentralization; confronting poverty from the local level; risk management; or the incorporation into the debate of commercial openness and its role in urban and rural development. For September 2006 the debate will center on modernization of local public management for the rational and effective use of technology.

Generating a Culture of Prevention

One of the most difficult problems to resolve in the region, and which directly touches municipalities as much in its effects as in responses for its solution, is vulnerability to poverty and to meteorological and seismic phenomena.

FEMICA, conscious of the fact that the greatest protection against disasters is an economically viable country with solid democratic institutions, has dedicated itself precisely to consolidating a local government in which the rights of citizens to a decent life prevail, so that their participation in public management is guaranteed, and strengthening government that is transparent, financially solid, with the will and the management capacity that allows it to reinforce public-private alliances for the municipality's economic, social and political development.

Nevertheless, the task is complicated, and in the particular case of vulnerability to natural disasters, it is very difficult. Why? The political leaders who hold responsibility for administration, and those involved in drafting the budgets, do not set aside resources for events that may or may not occur. From this point the difficulty has been to build a culture of prevention. Tropical storm Stan, in October 2005, left in evidence the little that has been achieved in this area, and that the task remains pending for all Central Americans.

FEMICA convened a network to debate this matter in 2003, benefiting from the support

of the Inter-American Development Bank, which participated with an active presence of various officials, for whom the issue of disasters and prevention are part of their agenda; such as they are for those in the business sector, environment and local development. Among the main conclusions of the meeting we can mention:

Local governments are key actors in disaster prevention and response, which is why they should strengthen the structures that would allow them to respond effectively to the problem. The process of risk management should be decentralized, which means decentralizing resources and decisions.

While it is true that local structures have been created to answer the demand for prevention, these do not manage resources, for an efficient and proactive effort; they do not plan and practice preventive actions regularly in keeping with the region's situation.

Local governments repeat their mistakes: planning of land usage is not done in accordance with a risk policy; there is an absence or failure to enforce building codes in construction; etc.

One of the challenges for FEMICA and the different public and private entities involved in local development is to promote the reinforcement or creation of environmental management offices with their own budgets, in which the policies of prevention and risk response are executed.

Generating the instruments that allow them to design strategies based on key information about vulnerability, maps, integrated systems of geographic information and other types.

It should be coordinated with the central government to decentralize in regards to the issue and its respective resources, raising experiences in risk management that allow replication in order to advance in concrete actions in the middle term.

FEMICA, also concerned about the vulnerability of most of its communities, has sought international support to reinforce the response capabilities of local governments. In this way, with the support of the Secretariat of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean, the International Development Research Center (IDRC) and the Inter-American Development Bank, two projects oriented to this proposal were executed.

Both projects have the implicit purpose of creating networks and promoting their sustainability, achieving through them the replication of experiences and strengthening knowledge of the issue.

It is not easy to build networks among cities, among local governments that allow them to work in alliance with different public and private entities. The difficulty lies in the motivation to remain in the network, without a monetary tri-

gger coming from external resources. However, there are challenges that can only be overcome in the middle term through synergy produced in the networks and alliances. They are political processes that the central governments avoid, in many cases the result of a bureaucracy reticent to change. This is why it is important that local governments generate their own efforts towards decentralizing management and prevention process and the respective designation of resources.

In the same way, it is up to them to designate their own resources and put the issue on their agenda; prioritize key structural measures for prevention, for example, the construction of dikes in areas vulnerable to flooding; enforcement of building codes, planning of land usage based on geographic information systems, water purification, treatment and disposal of solid waste.

Precisely, and as previously mentioned, FEMICA -- concerned about moving forward with a response to vulnerabilities of all kinds, from poverty to those arising from nature itself -- decided to discuss the issue of technology. It is organizing for the next network meeting an analysis of the modernization of public management through the use of technology.

Technology allows local governments to administer efficiently and effectively the resources they have available for generating development, in the field of risk management, instruments like territorial information systems, multi-user land registries, and systems of indicators are key for the municipality's planning in all areas of its authority, and primarily in territorial usage and planning.

And all of this in addition to the fact that technology allows local governments to be closer to the citizenry, the end user, and generate competitiveness for attracting investment and development of business in their territory.

The use of technology, therefore, will reinforce the work shared amongst governments, will strengthen and make more efficient the role of alliances and networks.

In Central America a great majority of municipalities are poor, which is why technology must respond to existing capacities, to continue growing in use in pace with progress made. Creativity will be one of the central components in the network meeting that FEMICA is convening for September. Technology is a means, not an end, and should not stress those using it, but rather facilitate work and save time and resources -- the local government should be very clear on this.

Research, debate and analysis of the problems are fundamental for constructive consensus on the advances that translate into concrete actions, tangible results for a citizenry avid about a non-exclusionary development, fundamental for progress in the governance of our countries.

Management of Environmental Services for Vulnerable Populations in Central American Cities (2001)

Objective:
Improve the capacities of local governments and their communities in reducing social and environmental vulnerabilities.

Products:

A training program targeting municipal government technicians in Honduras and Nicaragua.

Identification and evaluation of lessons learned in providing environmental services, utilizing a methodology that allows FEMICA and the associations to standardize this type of work.

Systemization of four experiences in risk management, meteorological and hydrometeorological issues, with the application of one methodology that permits FEMICA and the associations to standardize.

Design and apply didactic tools for training the human resources involved in the development of risk management.

Provide a base for the normative formulation to facilitate the use of technological tools in planning environmental services and territorial zoning.

Results:

Mayors and citizens committed to working on the problem, technicians from 16 municipalities in each country trained and with a solid conviction about the necessity applying in their countries what they have learned.

An instrument for planning of territorial zoning, SIGA, that will permit them, with a basis of social, economic and physical information, to sustain integral strategies for risk management.

Executor Institution: FEMICA and National Associations of Honduras (AMHON) and Nicaragua (AMUNIC).

Academic Support: CATIE - Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center

Environmental and Sustainable Urban Development Module, a Virtual Network of Exchange (2004)

Objective:
Achieve the functioning of the Environmental and Sustainable Urban Development Module in FEMICA's Internet portal.

Products:

Database that enriches knowledge management and strengthens environmental management in cities through the socialization of tools, methodological procedures, projects and environmental experiences for sustainable development.

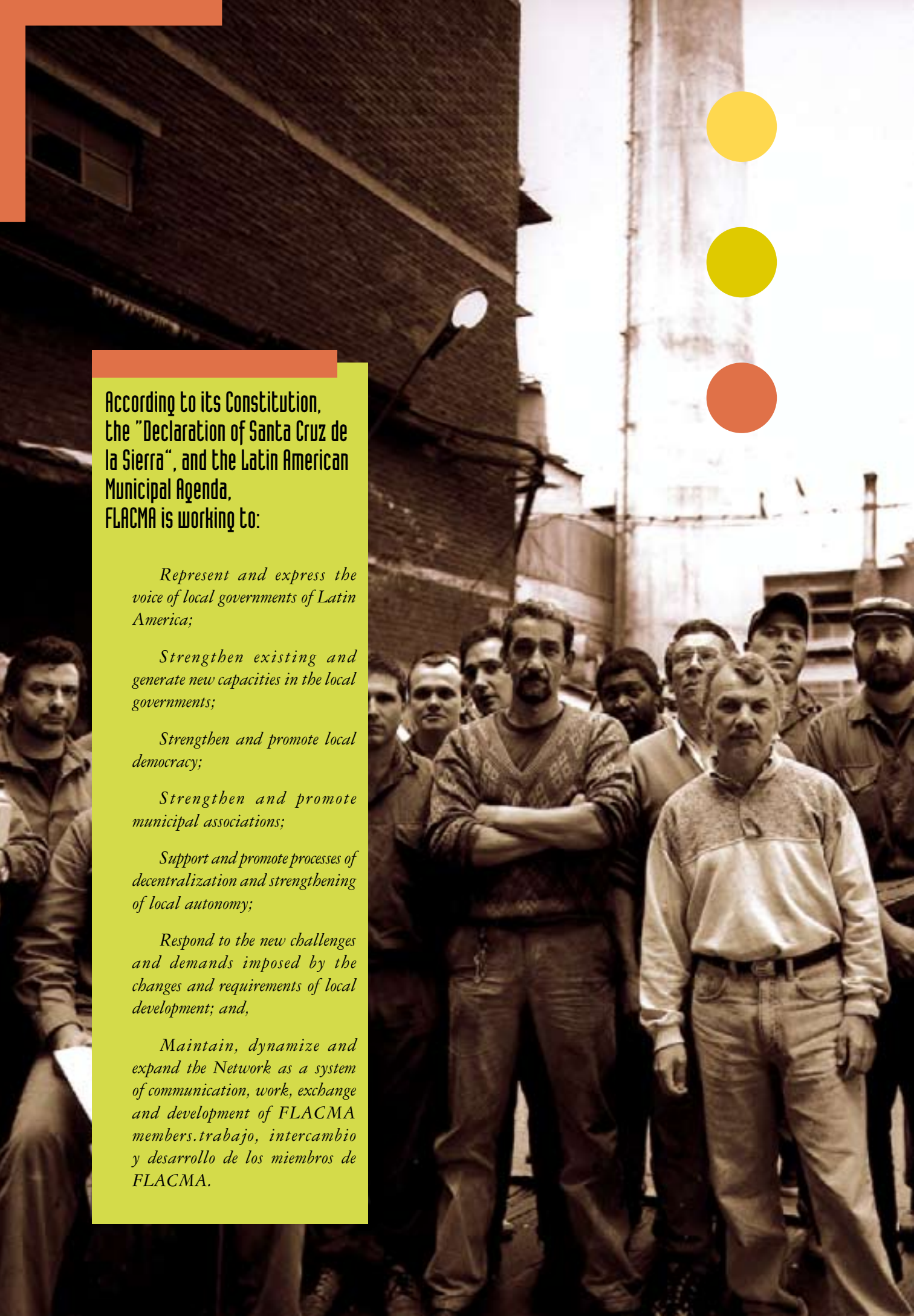
The Actors:

Capital cities, intermediate and small metropolitan areas of the six countries of Central America.

This module, in coordination with its counterpart in the web portal of Merco-Cities and in the Secretariat of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean, EMS, will contribute to the elaboration of a network database on Urban Environmental Management and Development for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Executor Institution: FEMICA and National Associations.

Alliances: Capital cities, organizations and NGOs involved in the issue.



According to its Constitution, the "Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra", and the Latin American Municipal Agenda, FLACMA is working to:

Represent and express the voice of local governments of Latin America;

Strengthen existing and generate new capacities in the local governments;

Strengthen and promote local democracy;

Strengthen and promote municipal associations;

Support and promote processes of decentralization and strengthening of local autonomy;

Respond to the new challenges and demands imposed by the changes and requirements of local development; and,

Maintain, dynamize and expand the Network as a system of communication, work, exchange and development of FLACMA members. trabajo, intercambio y desarrollo de los miembros de FLACMA.

Latin America: *How the Cities See the Global Challenges Facing the Region*

Por Jaime Torres Lara
FLACMA Secretary General

Latin America and the Caribbean represent the most urbanized region in the developing world, which means that around 75 percent of the population lives in cities. The countries with highest percentages of urban population are: Argentina, Uruguay and Venezuela, according to "State of the World's Cities Report 2001", by the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT). This document indicates that more than a billion impoverished people around the world live in urban areas in neighborhoods that lack the minimum public services for life.

Latin America and the Caribbean have the same level of urbanization as developed countries (75 percent). Although Africa is the region where the majority of the population still lives in rural areas, that continent has the fastest-growing urban population in the world today, according to the report.

In 1930, Latin America had just 100 million inhabitants. Today there are 510 million, of whom 391 million (75 percent) live in big cities. Latin America's urban population will approach 539 million (81 percent) of the 665 million people estimated to be living in the region in 2020.

In this context, the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean need to be concerned about the phenomenon of population growth and seek practical solutions that allow them to plan their development.

The Cities

Globalization and the growth of cities not only cause great economic impacts, but they also give rise to the formation of new

political and institutional relations within the countries, over which cities are going to have direct influence and, of course, within their own sphere of action.

Cities manage a complicated environment, their composition is the result of the organization of the prevailing economic interests. In this context, the economic and social policies of the State should be aimed at achieving sustainable development of cities, which are the generators of goods and services, wealth and social well being.

The multiple roles that cities play in the contemporary world impress a great dynamism on urban life; multiple actions are carried out that enable the development of industrial and services activities, commercial exchange and the recovery of resources for the State through fiscal policies. As such it is indispensable that national governments recognize in the cities and their local governments the strategic allies for achieving well being in function of sustainable human development.

The Political Voice of Local and City Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations of Local Governments, FLACMA, is a private, non-profit international organization with social and public aims, created with the principal goal of strengthening and uniting all of the region's municipalist currents.

FLACMA was founded as the voice and representation of local and city governments

of Latin America and the Caribbean, with the purpose of promoting local development processes in the region. It is a network of cities that connects associations -- national, sub-regional and thematic -- of local governments. FLACMA integrates and represents some 7,500 local governments in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Networking

Globalization, the interdependence and opening of economies, have increased competition amongst cities and territories on the one hand, and, on the other, they have increased the need to strengthen relationships of complementarity and to create alliances or networks amongst cities.

Cities are confronting new phases, like the transition of the information society and the global era, requiring an investment in communication and knowledge systems, which is why it is necessary to invest in human capital that is capable of taking on the challenges of competition in an interdependent world.

Networking, sharing experiences, strategic alliances and knowledge transfer are important tools that FLACMA has developed amongst its members, which has allowed it to become a Network of Networks.

The networks involve complementary systems of international solidarity and of exchanging knowledge and technology; at the same time they serve as an effective mechanism for providing a space for participation of cities in the global political arena.

In this context, FLACMA is a Network of Networks that integrates cities, municipalities and local government associations to foment exchange of experiences and knowledge management, with the purpose of developing cooperation in the elaboration and implementation of local public policies that are sustainable, solidary and equitable.

To cover the Latin American and Caribbean territory, FLACMA has established six regions: Mexico, Central America, Caribbean, Andean Community, Southern Cone and Brazil. FLACMA articulates its policy programs and projects in direct cooperation with institutions that have been working on the issue of local government, such as FEMICA (Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus), the Andean Network of Cities and Merco-Cities.

The first Congress of Latin American and Caribbean Municipalities, meeting in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, approved the Latin American Municipal Agenda: Vision and Mission of Local Governments and its Action Plan, which calls for expanding international

cooperation programs in all fields of local development, with particular focus on care for and protection of the natural environment.

It is our conviction that, through performing these roles, generating and executing actions, initiatives and projects in these areas, FLACMA contributes to sustainable human development in the local spheres of Latin America.

Today we have a politically consolidated institution. One can see a significant process of empowerment of FLACMA by the actors involved, which generates demands of active participation. These are today our principal strengths.

To contribute to developing concrete activities and strengthening the institutional presence of FLACMA, as well as promoting networking in this last phase, FLACMA has several projects, amongst which we can highlight the Network for Municipal Cooperation and Development, REDCOMUN, whose purpose and central outcome were the inclusion and utilization of new communications technologies by local Latin American governments and their associations.

In compliance with this mandate, FLACMA established systems of cooperation with various international institutions for financing, training and technical assistance; of which I highlight Environmental Management Secretariat, Urban Poverty and Environmental Program of the International Development Research Centre of Canada, IDCR, EMS-UPE-IDRC, for advising and working with FLACMA, and local governments, on issues of their expertise, in particular those related to urban vulnerability and prevention of natural disasters.

We initiated activities with EMS-IDRC, Sep. 14-22, 2005, in Quito, Ecuador, with the "Regional Training of Municipalities in Urban Vulnerability for Prevention of Natural Disasters/Integrated Management of Urban Vulnerability to Natural Disasters - Integrated System for Municipal Environmental Management (SIGA)". The objective was to train municipal technicians of the Andean region and researchers from municipalities benefiting from projects supported by Urban Poverty and Environment (UPE) - Secretariat of Environmental Management EMS-IDRC, applying SIGA's focus, as a tool for integral risk management in vulnerable urban areas of Latin America.

At the end of the course, the most important conclusions and recommendations were:

Create a Risk Management Network, with an integral focus, that would have a space on the FLACMA web site. This network would have as its thematic bases: diffusion of the SIGA methodology, instruction of training experts, and the creation of models for the application of replicated methodologies.

Within the network a group was established to work on building a communications and information system amongst cities for reducing vulnerability and preventing natural disasters.

With these experiences FLACMA established its technological base for promoting the creation of various thematic networks, and working with EMS-IDRC on the "Knowledge and Information Management System" for urban environmental problems.

For the implementation of the System, FLACMA and EMS-IDRC have created the "Network for Knowledge Management for Sustainable Municipal Development in Latin America and the Caribbean". This two-year project involves the coordination of a clearing house, with associated institutions: the Network of Merco-Cities (UTADS - Thematic Unit on Environment and Sustainable Development), FEMICA and the Andean Cities Network, through FLACMA, which will serve as central coordinator.

This initiative seeks to generate synergies and complementarity amongst the existing municipal networks in Latin America and the Caribbean, exchanging and disseminating information and the common experiences of environmental management and sustainable urban environment under way in the region.

The Platform will operate virtually -- it is a decentralized tool that will use the Internet for the input and output of information and data -- and is based on the model used by the Convention on Biological Diversity, which we will take to the municipal level. It functions as a network of networks that tends to facilitate access, promotion, dissemination and exchange of information and data from various organizations and institutions (in this case it will focus on Latin American and Caribbean municipalities), and will include the creation of a central portal dedicated exclusively to clean development mechanisms.

The web site will require a versatile software application that allows users and actors involved to conduct searches and to access information both through focal points and the main portal. Among many other impacts, the project will help consolidate the work of environmental units of the subregional municipal networks, employing a common technology platform that will promote the exchange of methodologies and best practices amongst the member cities.

National Associations of Local Governments

All Latin American countries have associations of local governments, at various

stages of development. FLACMA is composed mostly of these associations, which reinforces its ability to produce multiplier effects. This is decisive because FLACMA would not be able to reach individually the more than 16,000 municipalities existing in the region. As such, it is important to consider the functions and roles of the associations of local governments (ALGs).

The ALGs, exposed to relationships that are more diverse and of greater scope than those of its individual members, are sensitive to new issues and are in the position of greater legitimacy and credibility to disseminate and promote amongst their members the conceptions, methodologies and practices of sustainable local development, such as coordinating the actions of local governments with NGOs, grassroots community organizations, the private sector and national governments.

Another key message is that the ALGs can disseminate amongst its members issues like: democratic governance, transparency and integrity, and easy access by residents to information about the local administration, particularly about the use and designation of financial resources.

Additionally, and as the "culture of centralism" tends to reproduce itself at the municipal level, the ALGs are in a position to promote intra-municipal decentralization processes, as well as the participation of population segments that were previously excluded. Local governments frequently centralize power and resources in their territorial headquarters, usually a populated center, forgetting, for example, the demands and needs of the rural sector.

The ALGs, with their communications and training roles, are better positioned than are NGOs or national entities of municipal development, to promote new concepts and better practices of sustainable development, administration and non-restrictive participation in local public management.

For this reason it is important to strengthen national and regional associations of local governments as the legitimate intermediaries for municipal reinforcement.

In conclusion, we can affirm with absolute ownership that FLACMA is an institution of great significance, one that supports the institutional development of local governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, and promotes policies and programs aimed at achieving sustainable human development -- and in this way contributes to improving the quality of life of the region's inhabitants.

Global Challenges and City Networks: *Canada's Sustainable Cities Initiative*

By Rod Gillyatt
City Team Manager
Sustainable Cities Initiative
Industry Canada

Municipal governments all over the world are struggling to keep up with the challenges of rapid urbanization. In developing countries and emerging economies, urban problems of planning, waste management, wastewater management, clean energy, transportation, and economic development, challenge municipal governments that often lack the resources and the capacity to address them. That is where Industry Canada's Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) comes in. SCI takes an innovative approach to economic development and trade by finding an appropriate role for private sector in responding to the urgent needs of cities.

In 16 cities on four continents, Industry Canada's SCI forges partnerships between Canadian stakeholders from the private, public, and non-governmental sectors and municipalities in developing and emerging economies. In Latin America, there are SCI-partner cities in 6 countries including Mexico, Costa Rica, Honduras, Chile, Brazil and Argentina.

SCI has facilitated the private sector in working with municipal governments. As for the Canadian companies, they are usually small- to medium-sized businesses looking for an opportunity to expand internationally, but needing a hand to break into unknown markets. SCI is not a funding program, but focuses on providing solutions through:

- Analysis – by defining problems generated by rapid urbanization, and identifying integrated solutions through partnerships
- Support – through capacity-building, training, technology transfers and relationship building
- Action – by promoting Canadian solutions/approaches through partnerships among private sector, NGOs, government partners and cities

In each SCI city, Canadian teams, made up of experts from the private, public, and non-governmental sectors, sit down with counterparts to identify a long-term vision for the future. Canadians and their counterparts share experiences and ideas, determine priorities and explore avenues of collaboration. The resulting document is called a "Roadmap". Working groups form to define specific projects and to undertake feasibility studies. With a solid plan in place, and the support of the mayor of the city, the group looks for sources of funding. Once a project is off the ground, Industry Canada follows its progress through to implementation.

Background

The SCI concept was recommended in 1998 by Canada's National Round Table on Environment and Economy (NRTEE) and Industry Canada launched SCI as a pilot program in the fall of 1999. The pilot began with three cities: Katowice, Poland; Qingdao, China; and Salvador, Brazil. San José, Costa Rica and Córdoba, Argentina joined in late 2001. SCI was seen by Canadian private sector as an effective tool for promoting market development and trade opportunities, and for branding Canada as a pre-eminent source of expertise and technology for urban sustainability. Industry Canada played a pivotal role in identifying Canadian urban services expertise and in laying the foundation for partnerships and collaboration using a team approach.

In September 2002 during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the Prime Minister of Canada announced \$CDN 9 million for three years to expand the SCI pilot up to 17 cities.

Partners at Work in Salvador, Brazil

Language, geography, history, and climate may differ, but cities everywhere all have to cope with the same problems of creating a safe and clean urban environment for their citizens. Canadian municipalities share their expertise with cities overseas in this regard.

Salvador officials have gained insights from city-to-city collaboration with several Canadian municipalities. On transportation, the metropolitan area of Salvador, Brazil is made up of several different layers of government that haven't found common ground when it comes to improving the metropolitan transportation systems. The Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) shared their experience and expertise about how multiple municipalities cooperate on transportation with support from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). On tourism, Salvador has a waterfront area that, if rehabilitated, would boost tourism in this third most visited tourist destination in Brazil. By meeting with representatives from the City of Montreal, Salvador's city officials and urban planners benefited from Montreal's experience renewing the Old Port into a tourist attraction with world-class restaurants, attractive hotels, and boutique shopping.

Salvador, Brazil – like cities all over the world – has to tackle urban problems like waste management. With the help of Canadian businesses, and through a Municipal Partnership Agreement supported by FCM and SCI, Salvador has transformed an enormous dump into a cultural and recreational resource, as well as a source of landfill gas.

For example, city managers, technical personnel, and other key staff from Salvador learned much from their counterparts in the GVRD and developed a strong sense of collegiality. During a trip to Vancouver, Salvador staff visited a Vancouver landfill and a privately-owned energy generation facility powered by landfill gas. This visit showed how landfill gas could be harnessed for energy, and demonstrated a successful private/public partnership between a Canadian company and the City of Vancouver that owns and operates the landfill.

Three Canadian companies (Conestoga Rovers and Associates, Golder Associates and Burnside) worked together with Salvador to demonstrate electrical power generation using landfill biogas and to estimate the potential emissions reduction credits that could be generated at the Canabrava Landfill. As a result of the project, Salvador became the first city in Brazil to demonstrate electricity generation from landfill biogas. The project objectives were to:

- Transform an environmental liability (municipal landfill) into a resource
- Demonstrate electricity generation from landfill biogas
- Evaluate alternatives for the rehabilitation of the landfill site
- Quantify the landfill biogas through a baseline study in order to estimate the potential emission reduction credits for a full-scale project and qualify the project under the Clean Development Mechanism (Kyoto Protocol)

The City of Salvador, Brazil recently signed a concession with a Canadian-based company to capture and flare landfill gas at the Canabrava Landfill. The Canabrava Landfill project helped one Canadian engineering firm to fully penetrate the Brazilian market. The carbon credits will be sold by Salvador for an estimated \$US 3-4 million and used for capital expenditures such as the rehabilitation of the landfill site and to address other environmental, health and social issues.

Partners at Work in Matamoros, Mexico

The City of Matamoros like other cities along the Mexico-US border, is growing rapidly, with expansion in trade and with a burgeoning manufacturing industry. Today existing infrastructure and municipal services are overburdened by the increased traffic and expanding populations accompanying this growth. Solid waste management is a particular challenge and cities along the border struggle to manage vast stockpiles of scrap tires.

Matamoros joined SCI in 2003 and Golder Associates, a Canadian engineering company has since designed an integrated project that will transform a solid waste dump into a green energy facility. The project involves the conversion of landfill gas, scrap tires and other organic wastes into electrical energy and re-usable by-products, as well as an adjacent wind energy park, and is designed to:

- reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- reduce scrap tire stockpiles which are a fire hazard and breeding area for insects;
- generate revenue from the sale of electricity and carbon by-products to invest in more sustainable solid waste management facilities and services; and
- provide reliable energy generation for the region,

thus helping to improve the quality of air and the environment for the citizens of Matamoros and the surrounding region.

The Canada/Mexico Partnership

The Canada/Mexico Partnership (CMP) was established in October 2004 by the leaders of Mexico and Canada, calling for bi-national private and public working groups to identify areas of cooperation and enhance opportunities for economic development between the two countries. Industry Canada is the Canadian co lead of the Working Group on Urban Development and Sustainable Cities, which aims to facilitate sustainable economic development through the promotion of Canadian expertise in urban management. The Government of Mexico has taken a strong interest in the SCI urban sustainability model and hopes to replicate this innovative concept and successful SCI projects in other Mexican municipalities.

Urban Networks and Collaboration

International cooperation and collaboration on sustainable urban development is growing on many fronts. Organizations like FCM, the North American Development Bank, the Plus Network on Long-Term Urban Planning, the International Development Research Center (IDRC), UNHabitat, the World Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency, EcoPlan International Inc. (EPI) are growing their networks and empowering each other so as to contribute practical solutions to cities in need. Collaboration on urban planning and local economic development are described below.

Planning for Success

Long-term planning at the municipal level is a process that improves decision-making and strengthens the capacity of municipalities to tackle urban problems.

SCI works closely with the Plus Network, a peer learning Network of up to 30 cities sharing their experiences, expertise and tools to undertake very long term (60 to 100 year) planning for urban sustainability. The purpose of the Plus Network is to catalyze action on urban sustainability through promoting and supporting integrated long-term planning and demonstration projects in cities around the world. The Network shares learning, frameworks and tools thereby improving members' ability to assess results, reduce development costs and compare their progress to benchmarks and to one another.

The shared experience results in:

- better models of long-term planning;

- the development and application of different tools and techniques;
- the establishment of strategies and short-term goals that enable those long-term plans to be implemented; and
- the creation of benchmarks, measurable indicators and action plans for cities to start on the pathway to sustainability.

Salvador, Brazil is a member of the Plus Network and according to the former Secretary of Transport "Salvador does not have a lot of experience in long-term planning". Political and institutional instability can lead to a municipal culture that looks for a quick fix. The SCI model ensures that strategic planning, community consultation, and transparency are part of the solution and adapts to a range of urban problems. The experience of long-term planning and community consultation leaves a legacy of cooperation that can pave the way to future improvements to the quality of life in cities around the world.

Workshop in Latin America on Local Economic Development

Local Economic Development (LED) has been identified as a priority in the majority of SCI's 16 partner cities. In order to respond to this need, SCI partnered with EcoPlan International (EPI) to organize a regional conference on LED. The LED conference was hosted by Valparaíso/Viña del Mar, Chile in March 2005 and was attended by other SCI cities in Latin America including Cordoba, Argentina, Matamoros and Reynosa, Mexico, Sula Valley, Honduras, Porto Alegre, Brazil and San José, Costa Rica.

A Spanish version of the Strategic Planning for LED Resource Guide jointly prepared by EPI, UN-Habitat, and UN-Habitat's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean was introduced during the conference. According to EcoPlan there is a clear need for greater understanding of what constitutes LED in the Latin American setting as many local governments continue to regard it as economic development with subsequent trickledown effects to more marginalized groups. The public sector continues to look to foreign direct investment and tourism as the prime drivers of LED. The idea of looking internally for resources and capital, be it human, financial or physical (locational) is not extensively practiced. Based on the LED conference in Valparaíso/Viña del Mar, EPI have concluded that the LED Resource Guide can improve LED practices in Latin America.

SCI at the World Urban Forum

The third session of the World Urban Forum (WUF) will be held in Vancouver, Canada from 19–23 June 2006. The theme is Our Future: Sustainable Cities – Turning Ideas into Action. Vancouver was the venue of the historic first United Nations conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I), held in 1976. As urbanization, especially in the developing world, accelerates, Canada can share its experience and expertise with developing countries in such areas as urban management and planning. The involvement of the private

sector and the promotion of their expertise is critical to developing partnerships that can design practical and sustainable solutions for cities. This will assist the development of sustainable cities and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Industry Canada is organizing a Networking Event entitled: "Engaging Private Sector in Sustainable Urban Development – frameworks for successful partnerships" to challenge local authorities and finance institutions as well as other urban development partners around the world to create favourable conditions for private sector engagement in urban projects.





Environment Poses Sustainable Development *Challenge for Cities*

By Iván Moscoso Rodríguez

Technical Secretary of the Network of Environmental
Management Authorities in Latin American and Caribbean Cities

This mechanism of linkage amongst city governments in the Latin American and Caribbean region contributes to strengthening their management capacities in the social-environmental sphere. It emerges from the 1st Metropolitan Environmental Fair, held in Mexico City in October 2001, where the participating authorities issued the "Declaration of the Metropolitan Zone of the Valley of Mexico", which synthesizes the commitment of uniting in their will to work with each other to build sustainable cities.

The decision of the authorities was translated into a work plan for ongoing activities in training and dissemination of the region's experiences in urban-environmental issues, as a means to foment South-South collaboration. To articulate this plan and associated programs, a Network was established, as defined by its members: a space for encounter amongst the different entities that participate in the growth of the city, linked through the authorities, with the aim of strengthening urban-environmental management in concordance with the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development, the Implementation Plan of Johannesburg, the Millennium Development Goals and agreements of the Forum of Ministers of Environment, and others related to management in Latin American and Caribbean cities.

It has become common today to talk about networks. They have emerged everywhere, with different objectives and from different areas of human activity, expressing a sociability that is an integral part of people and has been present throughout the history of humanity, evolving according to the historical conditions and seeking to combine forces to achieve specific purposes.

Networks have come to compensate for limitations in traditional social organizations that were established to combine efforts in favor of social objectives, public or private. In recent decades, networks have emerged in Latin American from community groups to attend to their needs for survival and in defense of human rights; later, in the context of the spaces that have been opened up with democratization and in seeking government reform, the local and regional governments articulate themselves in associations and networks. In the private sphere there also emerge new linkage mechanisms to reinforce associations and in defense of shared interests.

The "network society" that has been facilitated by the technological revolution in communications provides linkages in a broader space than the city, the country and the region, bringing closer together the various interests around the planet. The community that emerges from these networks

has new spaces and contents, and, although it increases the operational complexities, it facilitates the integration of members whose identification of values and practices is defined more by function than by ideology, for which many seek to be functional and others to be alternatives to the changes that the prevailing socioeconomic system requires.

The identification of the Community of the Network Environmental Management Authorities in Latin American and Caribbean Cities is based on the values, practices and aspirations that the local governments generate and promote for building urban sustainability. In other words, this Community is committed to changing local public management in order to give a new conception and direction to urbanization and usage of the urban ecosystem. There is clear awareness about this amongst the Network members, which strengthens its relevance and that of the activities that serve its specific objectives:

To carry out activities for the development of local government capacities, as well as scientific and technical support for public urban socio-environmental management.

At the same time, to provide mechanisms so that the authorities receive from social organizations, the business community, higher education institutions and experts in urban-environmental management issues input for the democratic formulation of public policies and instruments for management and implementation.

To investigate issues and disseminate information to improve urban-environmental management in the region.

To facilitate the exchange of information, discussion and diffusion of issues related to agreements established in the "Declaration of the Metropolitan Zone of the Valley of Mexico".

To facilitate relationships with other networks and governmental instances at the regional/state or national level in order to foment and strengthen synergies that contribute to urban-environmental management.

To serve as a link with international bodies in order to carry out efforts that contribute to achieving the Network's objectives.

To focus activity in the urban environment, which today represents 75% of the region's population, as well as attending to the majority of inhabitants, reflecting a different conception of the relationship with the rural areas, with zones of primary activities, with spaces that provide environmental goods and services for the subsistence of persons and

of urban activities. For this, the Network promotes a systemic approach that links the factors of the Sustainable Development proposal.

The Network's work program has expanded during the past four years of activities, as much because of the increase in member government proposals for attending to the great needs that exist in urban-environmental management, as for the welcome received from entities of cooperation, agencies of the United Nations and academic institutions of the region, which find in the cities a mechanism for carrying out their plans. An important factor has been that our Network does not compete with other existing networks in the region in the governmental sphere, but rather seeks to combine efforts and make the most of synergies of those who turn to the Latin American and Caribbean cities to improve the population's living conditions and build sustainability.

Impacts on the Cities

The growth of the Network has had important support from the United Nations Environment Program, both for promoting training and dissemination activities and for facilitating the annual meeting of members, with the aim of direct sharing of experiences. This relationship has permitted the communication to local authorities the policy orientations that UNEP/ORPALC is promoting in the region, as well as putting priority on training in issues that the authorities most request for dealing with problems in managing waste, air and water, ecological zoning of their territories, among others.

Integrating synergies of Network members and diverse international bodies of the Americas and Europe, we initiated training activities in 2004 in the classroom modality, and in 2005 we began the distance learning modality. To date, an average of three technicians from each of the capitals and other cities in the region have received direct training. Collaborating in several courses and workshops were the Curitiba Environmental University, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Pan-American Health Organization, Mexico's National Polytechnic Institute, the Environmental and Zoning Procurator of the Federal District of Mexico, the Mexico City government, the Central American Commission on Environment and Development, and the government of the state of Mexico.





These people, who have received training in diverse areas, go on to introduce a new scientific and technical basis in their activities, factors that contribute to meeting local needs and, simultaneously, to generating conditions for building urban sustainability.

Among the relevant aspects of this advance is the Seminar/Fair that the Network holds annually in one of the region's cities, where there is a direct transference of successful experiences amongst Network members, favoring the horizontal relationships that characterize most networks. At the same time, in the seminars held in Mexico City in 2001, Lima in 2003, the Metropolitan Zone of Puerto Rico in 2004, and Panama City in 2005 have fostered dialogue with various national public bodies that play a role in managing cities, with private companies that offer environmental products and services, with non-governmental organizations and with academic institutions. All of these urban actors make the most of this shared space to connect with each other and to share institutional plans and ideas.

In the host city there is a presentation of urban-environmental information for the entire population, through the communications media, which help bring attention to and raise awareness about the issues, global and local alike. Later, local institutions link to the Network to receive ongoing information or to disseminate their experiences in the region.

With the aim of giving permanence to the exchange and diffusion of experiences, as well as carrying out distance learning, the Network has a web site: www.red-de-autoridades.org, accessible to anyone interested. From this site one can obtain information from member cities that have their own web sites, as well as from United Nations agencies and other international institutions that collaborate with the Network. In particular, members and interested parties can obtain daily information from the Regional Office of the United Nations Environment Program (www.pnuma.org).

We Continue to Build

Networks last until they have attained their goals or until their resources are exhausted, which is why it is important that long-term institutions achieve self-sufficiency based on the efforts of their own members. The task of reinforcing capabilities of local governments in the region has a long way to

go, and will continue as long as conditions of underdevelopment remain, with central governments weak in distributing resources to local governments. This limits the ability of city governments to ensure strong and sufficient teams to attend to socio-environmental functions. On the other hand, the practical policy of periodical changes in technical teams, resulting from the alternation of parties in government, and the lack or insufficient exercise of career public service, requires ongoing training of public servants.

Faced with this situation, any Network focused on strengthening local governments, and its management capabilities in particular, as well as promoting a local development that expresses more native force than external dependency, should serve as a mechanism for offering proposals that eradicate the historic insufficiencies of municipal government. Emphasis is on the need to broaden the space of environmental functions in the institutional political sphere of local governments, beginning with support for raising awareness of those who govern, so that they are able to orient the building of sustainability and, with it, resolve the social and environmental problems that have accumulated in our region. Innovation in the organic structure of local government, so that environmental policies are expressed in each administrative unit, is a growing task.

The maturation of environmental awareness in governments and the policies and plans that recognize the need to change the exclusive values and contaminating practices that prevail today will help build a new society, with people responsible for their duties and aware of their rights to live in harmony with nature and to foment equality and social justice. This is one orientation that the Network community shares, and aims to have present in each of the activities carried out.

The Network of Environmental Management Authorities in Latin American and Caribbean Cities is a tool for city governments to join forces with state and national governments, as well as with economic, social and academic entities, to contribute to a healthy urban life and full well being. The Network is also a mechanism to strengthen regional identity and integration and contribute to the realization of Agenda 21, and various subsequent international agreements, to reinforce democratic governance, South-South collaboration, constructive linkages with the North, and peace and justice in the urban environment.

The Environmental Management Secretariat (EMS) of the International Development Research Center (IDRC) has evolved into the Urban Poverty & Environment Program, UPE, since April 1, 2005. The Urban Poverty & Environment Program (UPE) funds research and activities in developing countries that apply integrated and participatory approaches to reducing environmental burdens on the urban poor and enhancing the use of natural resources for food, water and income security. www.idrc.ca/upe

Desde el 1 de abril de 2005, el Secretariado de Manejo del Medio Ambiente del Centro Internacional de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo de Canadá, se unió a la Iniciativa de Programa sobre Pobreza Urbana y Ambiente del IDRC (UPE/IDRC). Dicha iniciativa financia actividades e investigaciones en países en desarrollo, que mediante la aplicación de enfoques integrados y participativos fortalezcan la capacidad de los pobres de las zonas urbanas para acceder a los servicios ambientales en forma equitativa; reducir la degradación ambiental y la vulnerabilidad a los desastres naturales; y mejorar el uso de los recursos naturales para lograr la seguridad alimenticia, hídrica y de ingresos.

| www.idrc.ca/upe |

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